

## **Local Airports to Benefit From “AIR-21”**

*Washington, D.C.* -- Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) says local airports in Guthrie, Bartlesville, Ponca City, Blackwell-Tonkawa, and Perry will all benefit from an aviation bill passed today by the House of Representatives--letting Oklahoma airports keep a greater share of the federal revenue which they generate.

Under the Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (AIR-21), which passed 318 to 102, Oklahoma will receive over \$19.6 million in additional federal funding including \$150,000 each for airports in Guthrie, Bartlesville, Ponca City, and Blackwell-Tonkawa in FY 2001. The Perry Municipal Airport will also receive \$60,600.

**“Just like we did with the Highway Trust Fund two years ago, this bill lets Oklahoma keep more of the taxes we already pay to Washington,”** said Istook. **“It takes money out of the hands of Washington politicians and gives it back to the states where it originated.”**

AIR-21 will guarantee \$33-billion over the next three years to increase passenger safety and reduce flight delays, by allocating ticket tax and fuel tax money directly to aviation improvements. In past years, the money from the Aviation Trust Fund has not always been spent on aviation.

**“Air travel today is the norm for business and vacation travellers,”** said Istook. **“Making it safe is important, but it's not enough. We also want better facilities that fix the delays and the headaches that are too frequent, often because the system relies on old and outmoded equipment.”**

Funding for Oklahoma’s larger airports, Will Rogers in Oklahoma City, Tulsa International, and Lawton-Fort Sill Regional will also increase from \$2,875,437 to \$5,750,874.

The bill recently was approved by a House-Senate conference committee; it passed the Senate last Wednesday. The bill passed the House of Representatives today by a vote of 318 to 102. The bill will now be sent to the President.